

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JERUSA 00454 161446Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----043433 170410Z /15

R 161237Z FEB 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 265
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 454

EXDIS

HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PBOR, SHUM, IS, XF
SUBJ: SIILASVUO ON BEGIN, ELEMENTS OF PEACE

1. WHEN I SAW SIILASVUO FEB 16 HE WAS PESSIMISTIC ON BEGIN'S ABILITY TO MAKE THE CONCESSIONS ON SETTLEMENTS AND THE PALESTINIANS WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. HE REFERRED APPROVINGLY TO A LETTER FROM AN ARMENIAN JEW IN THE FEB 16 "JERUSALEM POST" IN WHICH THE WRITER STATED "(BEGIN) USUALLY SOUNDS MORE LIKE A DOGMATIC HIGH PRIEST THAN LIKE A HEAD OF STATE."
2. SIILASVUO SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GREAT MISTAKE FOR ANY SETTLEMENTS TO REMAIN IN THE TERRITORIES AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. THEY WOULD BECOME POINTS OF FRICTION AND WOULD ENDANGER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS REACHED.
3. HE ALSO CRITICIZED THE ISRAELI POSITION ON PALESTINIANS.

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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00454 161446Z

HE THOUGHT IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM WOULD NOT ULTIMATELY FIND EXPRESSION IN AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. I AGREED THAT HISTORICAL TRENDS SINCE 1945 SUPPORTED HIS VIEW BUT, REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, ALL THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE WAS A PALESTINIAN ENTITY LINKED TO JORDAN. THIS WOULD AT LEAST BE A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER FROM THE PALESTINIAN POINT OF VIEW

ALTHOUGH IT WOULD FALL FAR SHORT OF THEIR IDEAL.

4. SIILASVUO ASKED WHAT OUR ASSESSMENT OF BEGIN'S POLITICAL STRENGTH WAS. I REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH HE FACED CRITICS ON BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT, OUR CURRENT ESTIMATE WAS THAT HE ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE TO LEAD ISRAEL EITHER IN THE DIRECTION OF COMPROMISE OR TO A HARD LINE. SIILASVUO APPEARED DISAPPOINTED AND CLEARLY INDICATED HE THOUGHT THE LATTER WAS THE COURSE BEGIN WOULD TAKE.
NEWLIN

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 16 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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